

## THE PILGRIM'S SCRIP

### *Letters, Comments and Confessions from Readers of the Magazine*

#### ANOTHER VIEW OF ALDRICH

**I** PROTEST against Mr. Lefèvre's estimate of Senator Aldrich in the *MARCH AMERICAN MAGAZINE*. I have watched Aldrich in the Senate day after day, and I have studied him in Rhode Island, and I am firmly convinced that Mr. Lefèvre has been led into an overestimate of the man, mentally and morally.

We see the work done and we are likely to think only of the tool, especially if it is the thing seen; but the power that wields the tool we are apt to overlook, especially if it is unseen. Aldrich stands on his emplacement in the Senate, protected against attack, guarded by every device which foresight can erect about a precious tool. He stands in need of no such ability as must be possessed by Senators who rely on their own powers for their places. Public opinion has very little to do with his Senatorship. He is returned by the owners of the borough, that is all. Once, I believe, he was financed into the Senate by a well-known trust, which found his cause *in extremis*, invested in bold Rhode Island bribery the cash necessary to his salvation, and took out of the transaction a tariff advance which made them perhaps a million for every thousand they put in. This did not require ability on their part or on his. It merely required the coexistence of a disgraceful state, an ambitious candidate for the Senate, and a corrupt and corrupting trust. The ability necessary to the transaction could have been furnished by Hinky Dink or Bathouse John.

And here is where Aldrich is overestimated—his low cunning is taken for commanding intellect. Not that he hasn't ability, but that he has far more low cunning of the Hinky Dink sort. In his Senatorial career I have never seen him display any more ability than any clear-thinking member of a city council in a town of 50,000 might be expected to show. If he wants the vote of a Senator from Louisiana, the button that leads to the Sugar Trust is pressed. If he wants a man from Georgia, the railway-combine button is pressed. And it has taken no great ability to install this system of push-buttons. The stupid George III had almost as good a one to the rotten boroughs of his day.

Do you see my point? The thing required is ruthlessness—which Aldrich has; clear common sense—which Aldrich has; moral depravity—which Aldrich has; and a bomb-proof emplacement for the tool—which Aldrich has. It needs the Hinky Dink order of intelligence—that is all.

Aldrich may be the greatest tariff expert in the country, but his handling of himself in the last tariff debates showed him merely full of the sort of expert knowledge which a tool would have—an im-

mense amount of cooked-up, *ex parte* information. Often his failure to answer the arguments of his opponents would have been ruinous—if the debates had been addressed to the intelligence or conscience of the Senate. Time after time Aldrich turned pale and trembled under the attacks of the Insurgents; and time after time he left the Senate floor, whipped. But the power of which he is the tool was never whipped.

As in the tariff, so in his work for currency revolution, Aldrich is the tool and not the power. Still Rhode Island's rotten-borough condition, freeing him, as it does, from the pressure of public opinion, makes him the perfect tool. So he goes forth to win for that power more power. The thing which will tax his ability is getting the votes in spite of public opinion, and not the financial plan—that is easy. All that is necessary for that is to take the British, French and German systems, and "edit" out of them their subjection to government. The power back of Aldrich will by the same stroke of the pen be "edited" in. Any good committee of currency specialism could accomplish this in a few days.

But getting the votes is a different matter. And in getting the votes Mr. Aldrich's ability will be exercised, not along the intellectual lines of Hamilton, Pitt or Webster, or even of Thad Stevens, but along the devious lines of Hinky Dink. In his Western trip, Mr. Aldrich never gave forth a single syllable of illumination on the subject of a central bank of issue. He went feeling about like a ward wire-puller, shedding darkness and subtracting from the sum total of human knowledge.

HERBERT QUICK.

#### THE PRICE OF MEAT: A SUGGESTION

**T**HE anti-meat crusade, although its burdens have been almost exclusively borne by the farmers, is really a movement full of hope for the meat producer.

Thousands of farmers and stockmen have long believed that the live-stock markets were not on a legitimate supply and demand basis; that the great meat barons are, in plain English, just uncommon thieves.

They tell the farmers that the "anti-meat crusade" has largely reduced the demand, so that it becomes necessary for them to reduce the price of cattle and hogs when purchasing from the farmers, which they do at every opportunity.

At the time of such reductions in prices of stock on hoof do they reduce their prices on meats to the consumer?

Will some of the consumers please tell us? How